

241 barley after it has been parched and milled into flour is extremely
[252] nutritious, by the side of which Quaker Oats is insipid.

Nak Nas, or black barley, grows at the highest altitude at which any
[262] grain can be cultivated. Though it gives a good yield its flour is objected to even by Tibetans, who are by no means fastidious, on account of its black colour.

Drug-zur-Nas, or the six-sided barley, is on the whole inferior to Yangkar Nas both in yield and in quality.

Wheat flourishes in Ladakh and constitutes a really nourishing and palatable food. The two varieties chiefly grown are Drokhar, or white wheat, and Dromar, red wheat. It requires less manure than barley. The sandy soil is particularly suitable to the growth of wheat and excellent crops can be seen at 12,000 feet above sea-level. The wholewheat flour makes excellent bread.

A considerable quantity of buckwheat (Drawo) is cultivated, partly because it requires little manure and can flourish with a minimum of water. Its nutritive content bears no comparison with the locally grown barley or wheat.

[273] The mustard plant (Nyungskar) is cultivated because it produces
[257] mustard oil for frying, or else illumination when a wick floating in oil serves in lieu of kerosene oil. Oil extracted from the kernels of apricots serves a similar purpose.

The average yield of crops in Ladakh is not much more than seven-fold, though travellers to this country have estimated it at a higher figure. Many peasants are too poor to apply sufficient manure upon their lands, so this alone would account for the apparently low yield of cereals. When there is a scarcity of manure the farmer will plough in the wheat stubble of a field, and occasionally he will leave a field fallow for a year or two before sowing it with wheat or barley.

Reaping is performed with a hook or sickle, the stems of the grain being cut as close to the soil as possible. The threshing and winnowing operations are those which have been practised for hundreds of years in the East—namely, threshing with oxen or donkeys tied to a centre pole in the threshing floor, and winnowing by the use of wooden forks, with which the chaff is thrown into the air and is blown away by the wind, the grain falling to the ground.

511 No matter where you go in the country you find that the people con-
426 tribute to eke out a livelihood, though in most cases there is very little margin for luxuries even on a modest scale. This is due to the fact that the majority of peasants are born with a legacy of grain debts which it is obvious they have not the power to repay. In the meantime, when seeding-time comes round, they themselves borrow grain at 25 per cent. for about four or five months, by which time the crop is harvested. Down swoops the creditor to claim not only the interest but also the capital of the debt, leaving the peasant with the scantiest supply of grain with which he must support his family during the winter months. By that time he has consumed the grain which he should use for seeding, so he perforce must add to his accumulated debts by taking out another loan of grain. The grain stockist in this country is a usurer of the worst type, for he takes

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SOCIAL FESTIVALS IN LADAKH KASHMIR

184 In that part of Western Tibet called Ladakh social functions differ in certain respects from those which exist in Lahul, though the inhabitants in both districts share a common language, Tibetan.

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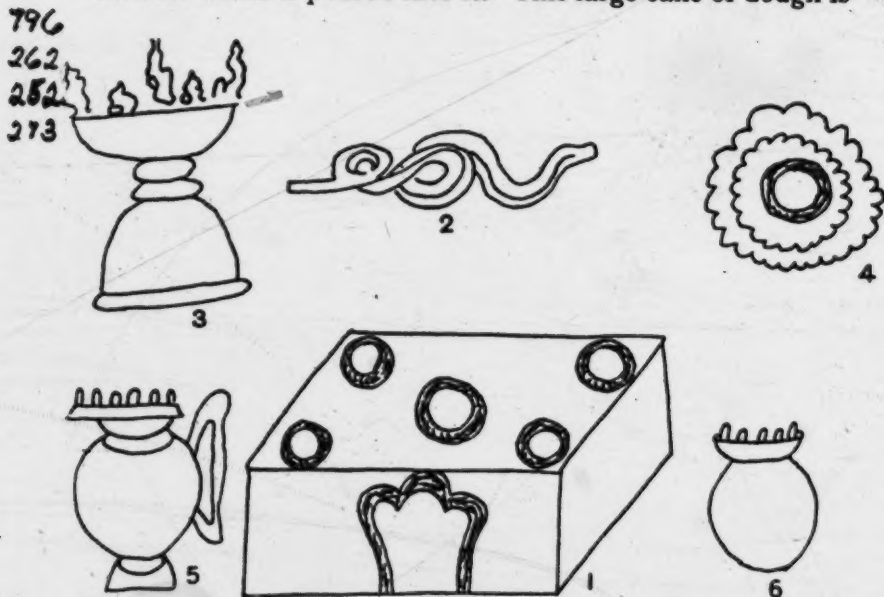
- 796 The New Year¹ festival begins on the 10th month of the
 ● 373 Tibetan calendar, continuing from the 25th until the 30th day. On the 25th day of that month each household prepares 30-40 little receptacles which serve as small lamps for illuminating the house. These are called *Bu-La*, and are made from the residue of mustard seed from which the oil has been extracted by pressure. The mustard oil is then poured into one such little lamp and a wick put in to float in it. These little lamps are lit at 8 o'clock in the evening. One such lamp is placed in the window of each room in the

¹ New Year

My Tibetan informant told me that originally the Ladakhis celebrated their New Year in the 12th month of their calendar as is the custom in other parts of Tibet, but in 1841-42 when the Dogras invaded Western Tibet and subjugated it, the Ladakhis decided to celebrate their new year in the 10th month so as to enable them to fight the invader. It is said that a large number of the Ladakhis having determined to take their wives and children along with them to the war, they were finally induced to forgo fighting altogether rather than expose their families [13] to the dangers and rigours of war. (For information concerning the conquest of the Western Empire of Tibet, see Dr. A. H. Francke's "A History of Western Tibet".) The Ladakhi new year has therefore been observed in the 10th month ever since.

- 196 house, whilst a number of them are arranged in a row near
● 373 the awning of the dwelling.

The members of the household then partake of *Tab-
796 Zan*. This consists of a large dish of parched barley dough
262 in the middle of which a hollow is made to receive the mus-
tard oil which is poured into it. This large cake of dough is



1. *rGya-Tab* (Stove). This is the common earthen stove used by Ladakhis. It is 3 feet square and 1 foot high. In the front there is an aperture for putting in the fuel of sticks and dried manure, and on the top of it there are three holes for placing the cooking utensils. 2. *Dib-Rug*. Sheep's intestines. 3. *Bu-La*. Little lamps made of dough. 4. *Tab-Zan*. Parched barley dough with a hollow in the centre in which mustard oil is poured. 5. *Kal-jor*. Beer pot. 6. *Za-rgyan*. An earthen vessel in which beer is kept. Sometimes used instead of the *Kal-jor*. Both are ornamented with butter pats on special occasions, and also serve as butter offerings.

796 then divided into four equal parts, one part (*Tab La Rgya-
262 Mo*), being placed on the earth stove (*Tab*) as an offering to the god of the hearth, one part (*Mag-Dung Rgya-Mo*) stuck on a large horizontal beam in the apartment, and one piece (*Sgo-Tag-Rgya-Mo*) stuck on the lintel of the front.